



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Saturday, October 13, 2012

9:00 AM

Groton Senior Center, 102 Newtown Road

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting started at 9:05 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0175

FYE 2014 Budget Process

Discussed

Mayor Somers made opening remarks about the format of the meeting and encouraged those in attendance to converse with the Council about budget issues. Town Manager Oefinger provided an overview of the budget process.

An informal dialog between the audience and Town Council ensued. Speakers were not asked to identify themselves. The following issues, suggestions, and concerns were raised; the Mayor and Councilors provided updates on issues where appropriate:

- Cell tower revenues.
- Disposition of vacant schools.
- Need for economic development efforts, replacement of retiring Economic Development Specialist, and additional funds for Planning and Development Services.
- Need for Town Council to be aware of Planning Commission efforts; change meeting dates so that Town Council and Planning Commission do not meet on the same night.
- Televising Town Council budget sessions.
- Board of Education budget format does not conform to the Town budget format.
- Groton has enough open space.
- The effort to consolidate the fire districts requires an outside consultant and funding.
- Status of Pfizer.
- Establishing wind power on open space lands.
- Farming /agriculture on open space lands for food pantry.
- Underground all of the power lines in Town, one street at a time if necessary.
- Replace Town vehicles with smart cars.
- Reward Town employees for cost saving suggestions; make employees stakeholders.
- Establish an internal audit department.
- Share fire department services on a regional basis.
- Outsource Town services.
- Energy opportunities: decrease number of streetlights; fuel cells; geothermal heat pumps; solar panels on Fitch High School roof; convert vehicles to propane.
- Do not cut funding to Special Needs Programs.
- Pension reform.

- *Vehicle sign in/out with mileage tracking.*
- *Educating the public on the Board of Education budget.*
- *Get Central Hall Building built and on the tax rolls.*
- *Televised Board of Education meetings.*
- *Educate the public about consolidation; must be grassroots effort.*
- *Duplication of police and fire services.*
- *Wean political subdivisions off of Town funding.*
- *The Town needs to do a better job explaining how Town government is set up and what the costs are.*
- *Impact of Electric Boat's move to New London on the tax base, area businesses (five corners in the City), vacant parking lots, etc.*
- *Development is being negatively impacted by open space factions.*
- *Need more 55+ housing/assisted living facilities in Groton.*
- *Need to provide a vision of what consolidation would look like.*
- *YouTube presentation on local government.*

Mayor Somers thanked everyone for coming.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 11:10 a.m.